412 (*eché*), hoe (*asron*), machete (*machit*), coa (*luk*), and digging stick (*avutel*). In a 243 few towns (Amatenango), where lands are [409] flat, the plow is made of wood and pulled by oxen but only for wheat farming. During [415] corn planting, the seed is carried by the [824] planter in a *morral* hung from the shoulder, [237] in a gourd with a large spout, or in containers made of armadillo shells. The harvested crops are placed in deep baskets, made of reed-grass, or in big pita (*chojak*) [412] net bags. The ear of corn is cleared of its [207] husk by a sharp bone or a small deer horn.

322 The axe, machete, and knife are used in
412 wood working, which is very rudimentary, though handsaw and hammer have a place. With these tools the Indians make doors, tables, seats, small benches, shelves. Blom [534] and LaFarge (1926–27, 2:351) add that the Tzeltal near Ocosingo also make violins of a shape similar to the European type, but they have no resonance and poor tone. They also manufacture pipes and combs roughly [463] finished. No village of this group has specialists in carpentry to compare with the Chamulas (Tzotzil-speaking), who supply furniture at low cost to San Cristóbal de las Casas and other places of the area.

324 Stone carving requires a pickaxe with
412 one end very sharp, the other very flat to serve as a hammer, and a short wooden handle. This is the tool used in Tenejapa for making metates. These metates have three legs, but Blom and LaFarge (1926–27, 2:338) mention metates without legs (Ocosingo municipio) which are made of volcanic stone found along the San Martin River. According to the Tzeltal of Oxchuc, the name of the metate is *chá*, its handle *kab-chá*.

412 An iron bar to break the ground, an axe, and a machete are the tools for building huts, chickencoops, sweat houses, and other small structures.

283 Another tool, used in the making of pita
413 rope, is *karet*, which probably comes from the Spanish *carreta*. It consists of a wooden disc fixed to a tree trunk that is nailed to

[P.206-A]

787 776 been taken away by the local authorities and sent to the Indians' Affairs Office in San Cristobal.

Life Cycle

842 183 *Pregnancy and Childbirth*

The strongest desire of every Tzeltal couple is to create a numerous family, preferably boys. The relationship between sexual intercourse and pregnancy is well understood among the Indians. They know that pregnancy lasts nine months and they keep a good count of it. On the other hand, there are ideas about the possibility of the woman being influenced by old men or "the owners of the nagual," who can interrupt pregnancy and change the fetus from one woman to another. This is why a woman who thinks she is pregnant for three or four months suddenly realizes that she carries nothing any more, while another one, maybe her neighbor, finds herself in advanced pregnancy, giving birth a few months later. It is to be stressed, however, that these changes can take place only among married women.

843 [833] 843 789

844 [81] In conservative villages (Tenejapa, Oxchuc, Cancuc) there is no professional midwife. Children are delivered by the oldest women in the neighborhood.

[757] [237] When labor begins, the first thing is to give the mother a beverage made of powdered opossum tail dissolved in boiling water. It is very common for Indians to have a dry tail hanging next the fireplace. The woman kneels at labor, facing the midwife. The husband's belt or the woman's rebozo is tied very tightly around the upper part of the abdomen to prevent the child from "going up again." The mother can also help herself by seizing a rope tied to the roof, or taking firm hold of any post of the house. The umbilical cord is chopped with a machete or cut with scissors, supported on an ear of corn. This ear is afterwards used as seed and is considered very fertile.

[241] [824]

[757] When labor has finished, the mother is given another hot beverage of pepper,

[P 223-B]

844 cloves, and corncake, to keep her "warm
[757] and fertile." The placenta can be burned,
[842] thrown to the dogs, or deeply buried in case
the mother does not want another preg-
[789] nancy soon. The umbilical cord is put under
a three-stone fireplace if the baby is a girl,
on top of a tree if it is a boy so that he may
become brave and agile when adult.

846 A few hours after childbirth, at the latest
515 the next day, both mother and child take a
temascal (steam bath). Some women stay
in the temascal until they feel completely
recovered.

Childhood and Adolescence

789 During the first weeks of life, children are
774 in danger of losing their souls because their
inexperience makes them an easy prey to
the naguales and bad spirits who wander
around. As protection, mothers place a small
[237] piece of beeswax at the back of the child's
head or tie, as a bracelet, a red or blue
thread around the wrist. If none of these
precautions are taken, the mother has to
cover with branches the paths her child
walks, so that his soul can easily find its way
in case he loses it.

789 Because of all these dangers, fathers al-
852 ways try to perform the ceremony of "seed
774 the soul of the child" as soon as possible. It
[553] is during this ceremony that the child is
given a name, later confirmed according to
[608] Catholic ritual at the ceremonial center. A
very important aspect of the ceremony is
selection of the godparents.

753 *Sickness and Death*

776 Most sicknesses come from infection or
[888] malnutrition. To the natives, however, ill-
nesses have a supernatural cause and are
ascribed either to the anger of gods and
spirits or to old people who have a nagual
or who can throw a spell. The most frequent
explanation is that naguales or supernatural
beings are acting against people. They can
adopt human or animal form or appear as

[P 224-A]

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

necks and round bottoms. Two were full of corn and lime for tortillas, just off the fire. A big Tenango jar, *k'ip*, of the kind to be described at that place, was used for water.

A pottery dish, about 7 centimeters across, *tsets*, is commonly offered to guests to wash their hands. It is placed on a pottery stand of an hour-glass shape, about 15 centimeters high, *awaliko* (see fig. 299). The ordinary plates and general vessels are flat gourd dishes, *qai'*, about 20 centimeters across. Gourds as well were used for a dipper, *tuts*, and a water-jar, *tsux*. Two nets hung from the rack. There were three small baskets, *tutemotc*, and four big ones, *mukulmotc*. Hanging on the wall were a pair of the basket-work sandals mentioned before, and selected ears of corn for seed. The wife's textile outfit, more fully described later, consisted of a spindle, *pětět*,

FIG. 291—Bachajon Fireplace.

with clay whorl, spun in a gourd bowl, *tsima*, cotton, *t'umin*, hanging in leaves, and the loom itself, *holčl*. A sling, made of a forked stick and rubber band with a leather piece to take the clay pellet, *finmutc*, belonged to the small boy. Bananas were drying on the rack. With them were laid, or hanging in packages of leaves, beeswax, *tcavek*, blocks, 20 x 20 x 2 centimeters, for trade purposes, used for making candles, a lump of hard red clay, *baq lum* ("bitter earth"), for washing the hair, and sometimes also eaten, a package of brown loaf sugar, salt, *atsam*, traded down from the Zotzil country, several packages of pimiento pepper, and serpent fat, *junto tcan*, for rubbing on the chest to cure coughs. Under the table was a basket of coarse, blackish-gray clay for making pottery, *tcavek lum* ("beeswax earth"). Five wild boars' jaws and an armadillo's tail

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

Ladino butchers in the neighboring town. The cows are not milked either for local consumption or sale. Fertilizers are for the most part wasted since the cattle roam freely in the communal pasture lands except in the case of a few corrals owned by families. Hides are cured rather crudely and are used for saddle packs or protective aprons by the men, but none are sold.

The cooperatives. The notion of a cooperative to mobilize capital had been introduced by the I.N.I. in 1957 with the inauguration of a store owned by over one hundred members of the community. In the first years of its existence, the cooperative had some difficulties, primarily in convincing the Indians that when the returns on shares were lower in any year from prior levels, it did not indicate that the agents were stealing the money.

The cooperative store was bought by the Indians of the town from the I.N.I. in 1964 after the members had some trouble receiving returns on their shares. There are now one hundred and twenty-two members. The profits of 1965 were reinvested in the purchase of the corn-grinding mill. Current profits at the store are lent at 5 percent per month interest. The store grosses 80 to 100 pesos in sales daily, and the mill grossess 100 pesos. The wages paid to the storekeeper are 300 pesos and to the miller 250 per month.

Now that the cooperative is independent of the government, one of the stated policies is not to sell a single share to a Ladino or member of another community. "We do not want to give gifts to the Ladinos," the secretary of the cooperative told me. He added, "There was a Ladino in Teopisca who wanted to join with 5,000 pesos, but we wouldn't let him in. If you let them in, they would come to dominate the pueblo." The cooperative store does not share profits with the consumers but gives dividends. The 11,380-peso assets in the year 1965 were reinvested in stock and in the purchase of corn at harvest which was then sold at one and a half or two times the sale price.

The Indians developed their first independent cooperative in the ownership of a *marimba*, a musical instrument like a xylophone, operated by eight men of the community. This enterprise failed because the players never developed sufficient skill to be commissioned to play outside of town.